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Verschuieren et al. (43) Pub. Date: **May 16, 2002**(54) **DIRECT-TO-PLATE LITHOGRAPHIC  
PRINTING METHOD USING AUTOMATIC  
PLATE-COATING AND CLEANING**(30) **Foreign Application Priority Data**

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CHICAGO, IL 60601-6780 (US)**(57) **ABSTRACT**

A direct-to-plate method of lithographic printing is disclosed wherein a printing press is used that is coupled to a coating apparatus and to a cleaning apparatus; wherein the coating apparatus applies an image-recording layer on a substrate so as to obtain a printing plate, which is mechanically transferred to the printing press; and wherein, after the print job, the printing plate is mechanically transferred to the cleaning apparatus wherein the substrate is recycled, so that the recycled substrated can be reused in a next cycle of coating, printing and cleaning. The off-press coating and the off-press cleaning step provide a fully automated printing method wherein the press down-time is minimized. The method comprises also an off-press or an on-press exposure step.

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